

Lyons Canyon Ranch

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5.14 SHERIFF SERVICES

This section provides an analysis of police services, which is based on information provided by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff's Department) and the California Highway Patrol (CHP). The Sheriff's Department maintains ultimate review and approval authority over aspects of the proposed development that relate to police protection, and may identify further recommendations and/or requirements.

5.14.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

The Santa Clarita Valley Station of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is responsible for providing general law enforcement to the City of Santa Clarita through a vesting contract between the two agencies. The current contract between the City of Santa Clarita and the County of Los Angeles was renewed on June 30, 2004 and will extend until June 2009. Funding for the Sheriff's Department in the City is provided by the City under the terms of the vesting contract.

The Santa Clarita Valley Sheriff Station would be responsible for providing general law enforcement to the Specific Plan area. The sheriff's station is located near the intersection of Magic Mountain Parkway and Valencia Boulevard, at 23740 Magic Mountain Parkway in Valencia, which is approximately three to four miles from the project site.¹ The Sheriff station maintains a staff of 171 sworn deputies, and serves an area of 656 square miles and a population of approximately 200,000 (including the City itself). The Sheriff's Department has an ideal population ratio of one deputy per 1,000 residents. With current staffing of 171 sworn deputies currently assigned, the existing ratio is 1 deputy per 1,169 residents.² Equipment and services provided to the Santa Clarita Valley include 24-hour designated County cars, helicopters, search and rescue, mounted posse, and emergency operation centers.³

The Sheriff's Department also conducts Search and Rescue operations through its Santa Clarita Valley station. Search and Rescue operations conducted by the Sheriff's Department are generally conducted in mountainous terrain (i.e., downed plane or lost hikers). The Santa Clarita Station Search and Rescue team uses the station's helicopter and has access to the Antelope Valley station's helicopter. Mutual aid exists with other Search and Rescue teams located both within and outside of Los Angeles County, and is organized through the State's Office of Emergency Services. Search and Rescue operations are funded through the Reserve Forces Bureau and private sources. Urban search and rescue operations, (i.e., rescues from building collapse), are performed by the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

¹ Per written communications with Patti A. Minutello, Captain of the Santa Clarita Valley Station, on July 28, 2005.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

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STATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE/EVACUATION PLANS

After the 1993 Oakland fire, the State of California passed legislation authorizing the State's Office of Emergency Services to prepare a Standard Emergency Management System (SEMS) program which sets forth measures by which a jurisdiction handles emergency disasters. By December 1996, each jurisdiction was required to show the Office of Emergency Services that it is in compliance with SEMS through a number of measures, including having an up-to-date emergency management plan, which would include an emergency evacuation plan. Non-compliance with SEMS can result in the state withholding disaster relief from the non-complying jurisdiction in the event of an emergency disaster.

The California Office of Emergency Services coordinates an emergency organizational network of local Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) in the state's cities, regional EOCs within each county, and the California Office of Emergency Services. The regional office of the California Office of Emergency Services is located in Los Alamitos, and the Los Angeles County's EOC is located in downtown Los Angeles. The County Office of Emergency Management has prepared the County's Multi-Hazard Functional Plan, which details the coordination of County agencies during and after a catastrophic event and establishes the framework for the mutual aid agreements with the CHP, and federal, state, and other local governments in the region. It also serves as the emergency management plan (including emergency evacuation plan) for the entire County. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted a revised plan on February 17, 1998.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE/EVACUATION PLANS

The County of Los Angeles is in compliance with SEMS and is responsible for emergency operations within the County boundaries.

The City of Santa Clarita serves as the EOC for the Santa Clarita Valley area. The Santa Clarita EOC works in cooperation and coordination with local and regional offices of the California Office of Emergency Services and the Los Angeles County Fire and Sheriff's Departments to coordinate community action in the event of a disaster, such as fire suppression, search and rescue, evacuation, post-disaster safety inspections, and clean-up efforts in its service area, which includes the City of Santa Clarita. The City's EOC can be entirely self-sustaining during disaster operations.⁴

CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL (CHP)

The CHP provides traffic regulation enforcement for unincorporated Santa Clarita Valley and surrounding areas from its station located at 28648 The Old Road, near the interchange of I-5 and State Route 126. The CHP patrols a service area of approximately 700 square miles, which includes Interstate 5, State Route 126, State Route 14, and all unincorporated areas and roadways, including the project site. This service area extends westerly to the Ventura County

⁴ *Ibid.*

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line, east to Agua Dulce, north to State Route 138 (and along State Route 138 to Avenue 22 East), and south to State Route 118.

The primary responsibility of the CHP is to patrol State Highways and County roadways in the previously identified service area, enforce traffic regulations, respond to traffic accidents, and to provide service and assistance for disabled vehicles. In the Santa Clarita Valley area, the CHP maintains a Mutual Aid Agreement with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. The Newhall CHP area is staffed by 73 uniform and nine non-uniform personnel.⁵ The Los Angeles and Orange County areas are served on a limited basis by a helicopter and a fixed wing aircraft based out of Fullerton Airport. From May 2004 through May 2005, the CHP responded to approximately 86,197 calls/contacts in its service area, including calls which involved enforcement contacts (tickets and arrests), accidents, and motorist services (disabled vehicles).⁶

5.14.2 SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLD CRITERIA

Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* contains the Initial Study Environmental Checklist form used during preparation of the project Initial Study, which is contained in Appendix A of this EIR. The Initial Study includes questions relating to sheriff services. The issues presented in the Initial Study Checklist have been utilized as thresholds of significance in this Section. Accordingly, a project may create a significant environmental impact if one or more of the following occurs:

- ◆ Substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives.

In addition to the above, the Sheriff Department's threshold of 1 deputy per 1,000 residents has been used for impact analysis.

5.14.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

CONSTRUCTION-RELATED IMPACTS

- ◆ ***CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT COULD RESULT IN AN INCREASED DEMAND FOR SHERIFF SERVICES.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Significant Impact.

⁵ Per information from the Riverpark Draft EIR, written communication from Captain B. M. Kilmer, Commander, California Highway Patrol, Santa Clarita Valley Station, November 15, 2002.

⁶ Per information from telephone interview with Lieutenant Todd Hoose, California Highway Patrol, Santa Clarita Valley Station, July 5, 2005.

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Impact Analysis: During the construction phase, Sheriff's service requirements on the project site would be increased over existing demands as a result of both increased persons and the presence of buildings and equipment on the project site. The daytime population would increase due to the presence of construction workers on the project site. This increase in the daytime population would vary due to the type of construction activities being conducted (i.e., site grading, construction of structures, or infrastructure improvements).

There is a potential for increased calls for service to the project site as a result of the increased number of persons at the project site. Due to the presence of building materials, construction equipment, and related temporary office buildings, the potential for vandalism and theft is greater; thereby, increasing Sheriff's calls for service demands for property protection. During the construction phase of the proposed project, response times for emergency and non-emergency calls are not expected to vary from those currently experienced by residential uses located to the north of the project site.

During the construction phase, private security patrols would be utilized to protect the project site; thereby reducing potential demands on the existing Sheriff's Department resources. Given the provision of private security personnel, the proposed project is not expected to affect the existing level of service being provided by the Sheriff's Department. With incorporation of this mitigation measure (refer to Mitigation Measure SS1), no significant impacts are anticipated during the construction phase.

Construction-related traffic on the project site is not expected to result in impacts on the CHP, which regulates traffic in the unincorporated areas of the Santa Clarita Valley. Slow-moving construction-related traffic on adjacent roadways could reduce optimal traffic flows and could delay emergency vehicles traveling through the area. However, they would not result in a significant impact on traffic flows because construction-related traffic would only occur during short periods of time during the day and would cease upon project completion, resulting in less than significant impacts in this regard.

Mitigation Measures:

- SS1 During construction, private security patrols shall be utilized to protect the project site.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

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OPERATIONAL IMPACTS

◆ ***OPERATIONS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT COULD RESULT IN AN INCREASED DEMAND FOR SHERIFF SERVICES.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: The County of Los Angeles Sheriff's Department would have the responsibility to provide general law enforcement services for the project site under their existing contract with the County of Los Angeles. It is anticipated that demands for Sheriff's services in the project area would increase above current levels upon buildout of the proposed project.

The Sheriff's Department projects a response time to the Lyons Canyon Ranch Project area for emergency calls of approximately five to eight minutes, a response time for priority calls of approximately eight to ten minutes, and a response time for non-emergency calls of approximately 20 to 30 minutes.⁷ These response times are approximations only, and would be dependent on both the deployment of area radio cars and traffic conditions. However, response times to the project area are within the optimal response times as defined by the Sheriff's Department. It is important to note that due to the current undeveloped state of the project area, emergency and non-emergency calls to the project area are rare.

The Sheriff's Department utilized the January 1998 California Department of Finance (DOF) residential dwelling unit factor of 3.011 persons per dwelling unit and determined that the proposed project would generate a population increase of 572 persons.⁸ This EIR utilized the 2004 DOF residential dwelling unit factor of 3.081 persons per household. Using this factor, the proposed project would result in a project population of 585 ($3.081 \times 190 = 585$) new residents to the project site. Considering the Sheriff's Department's ideal population ratio of 1 officer per 1,000 persons, the number of deputies required by the proposed project has conservatively been rounded up. Based upon this conservative estimation, at buildout, the proposed project would require one additional deputy.

Without additional Sheriff's Department staffing and facilities, the proposed project population increase would decrease the existing level of service of the Sheriff's Department in the County and would result in a significant impact to Sheriff services. As the proposed project is developed, tax revenues from property taxes would be generated and deposited in the County of Los Angeles General Fund. A portion of these revenues would then be allocated, in accordance with the County of Los Angeles, to maintain staffing and equipment levels for the Santa Clarita Valley Sheriff's Substation in response to related demands. It is anticipated that the existing level of service would be provided for the proposed project through existing funding sources. Although the proposed project would increase demands for Sheriff's services, these service demands can be met through the allocation of revenues collected from the proposed project using existing sources; therefore, no significant impacts are anticipated.

⁷ Per written communications with Patti A. Minutello, Captain of the Santa Clarita Valley Station, on July 28, 2005.

⁸ Per written communication with Patti A. Minutello, Captain Santa Clarita Valley Station, on July 28, 2005.

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In addition, potential significant impacts to Sheriff services could arise as a result of project design, landscape materials and building orientation. However, with the incorporation of safety design techniques into the project design (refer to Mitigation Measures SS2 through SS6), potentially significant security impacts to persons and property would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

- SS2 Final building plans shall be submitted to the County Sheriff for approval. All Sheriff's Department design requirements which reduce demands for service and ensure adequate public safety (such as those pertaining to site access, site security lighting) shall be incorporated into the final building designs prior to issuance of a building permit.
- SS3 Project design shall landscape the project site with low-growing groundcover and shade trees, rather than a predominance of shrubs which could conceal potential criminal activity around buildings and parking areas.
- SS4 Project design shall provide lighting, to the satisfaction of the Sheriff's Department, around and throughout the development to enhance crime prevention and enforcement efforts.
- SS5 Project design shall provide clearly visible (during the day and night) address signs and/or building numbers for easy identification during emergencies.
- SS6 Project design shall provide visibility of doors and windows from the street and between buildings.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant.

◆ ***OPERATIONS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT COULD IMPACT LOS ANGELES COUNTY EMERGENCY RESPONSE/EVACUATION PLANS.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: Upon buildout, the resident and daytime populations of the project site would increase above current levels. These populations would be subject to potential emergencies (e.g., earthquake, fire, etc.).

Two primary entrances are proposed from The Old Road: one is located the northern project boundary, and the secondary access is located approximately 1,100 feet to the south. A primary residential street extends from each entry, providing access to each neighborhood. The simple circulation system would provide alternative evacuation routes for the site, which is easily accessible to Interstate 5. Given these alternative evacuation routes, it is not anticipated that the design of the proposed project would preclude implementation of an evacuation plan, which

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would provide for the safe movement of future residents. Consequently, no significant impacts are expected to occur with regard to emergency evacuation of the project site or its surroundings.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Not applicable.

◆ ***OPERATIONS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT COULD RESULT IN AN INCREASED DEMAND FOR CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL SERVICES.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: Upon buildout, demands for CHP services on highways in the unincorporated areas surrounding the project site would increase due to vehicular traffic generated by the project. There is no guarantee that additional funding will be increased to either the State General Funds or the budget allocation to the CHP. Therefore, the increased demand on CHP services may not be offset by an increase in staffing in the Santa Clarita Valley. However, the incremental impact on CHP services is not determined to be significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

5.14.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

POLICE PROTECTION SERVICES

◆ ***DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT AND RELATED PROJECTS WOULD INCREASE DEMANDS FOR POLICE PROTECTION SERVICES IN THE SANTA CLARITA VALLEY.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: Cumulative population growth attributable to the proposed project and related projects would decrease the existing level of service of the Sheriff's Department in the unincorporated areas in the Santa Clarita Valley. However, as the proposed project and related projects are developed, tax revenues from property would be generated and accrued by Los Angeles County, and the City of Santa Clarita as applicable. A portion of these revenues would then be allocated, in accordance with the County of Los Angeles and City of Santa Clarita contractual service agreement, to maintain staffing and equipment levels for the Santa Clarita Valley Sheriff's Substation in response to related demands. Although the proposed project and related projects would increase demands for Sheriff's services, these service demands can be met through the allocation of revenues collected from the cumulative project developments using existing sources. Therefore, no significant impacts are anticipated.

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Increased revenues generated by the proposed project and related projects via motor vehicle registration fees paid by new on-site residents and businesses would provide funding for additional staffing and equipment for the CHP that could be allocated by the State CHP office to the Santa Clarita Valley Station to meet future demands. Based on the CHP's anticipation to maintain the same level of service, no significant cumulative impacts on CHP services are anticipated.

Mitigation Measures: Refer to Mitigation Measures SS1 through SS6. No other mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Significant and unavoidable. General funding allocations are determined by the Board of Supervisors.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE/EVACUATION PLANS

◆ **DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT AND RELATED PROJECTS COULD IMPACT COUNTY EMERGENCY RESPONSE/EVACUATION PLANS.**

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: The resident and daytime populations of the cumulative project sites would increase above current levels upon buildout of the proposed project and related projects. These populations would be subject to potential emergencies (e.g., earthquake, fire, etc.). However, all development projects in the Santa Clarita Valley are subject to review and approval by the Los Angeles County Fire Department, which requires that, among other conditions, adequate access exists for emergency vehicles. Given that the proposed project and related projects would be required to provide adequate emergency vehicle access, cumulative development would not adversely affect or prevent implementation of any emergency response or evacuation plans. As such, impacts would be less than significant in this regard.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are available.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Significant and unavoidable.